

EXISTING USES AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

A. Timber Management

Timber harvesting became an important industry in the Two Hearted River Watershed during the late 1800's when loggers, who had nearly exhausted the enormous stands of white pine in the lower peninsula, moved northward in their quest for pine logs. By the early 1900's most of the large pine had been removed, and wild fires followed on the heels of the loggers. Repeated fires in many areas destroyed the natural cover to such a degree that forest succession has reverted back to the grass stage. Some of these areas still exist as open stump fields. Thousands of acres were replanted by Civilian Conservation Corps crews and reforestation still continues today on a limited scale. With effective fire protection, the forests returned naturally; principally to jack pine, and to a lesser degree to red pine and white pine.

When the virgin pine was exhausted, the loggers turned their efforts to the hardwood and cedar stands remaining. Due, possibly, to a less lucrative market for species other than pine, logging operations were not as thorough for these other types and many stands were left untouched.

Second-growth timber now covers most of the scars of the early activity, and logging, primarily for pulpwood, and to a lesser degree for sawlogs, has again become an important industry.

B. Private Recreation Areas and Seasonal Dwellings

A small private camp known as Gene's Camp, catering to fishermen, is located on the first land shelf above the state campground at the mouth of the river. Facilities are limited to a few rooms to rent and several camp and trailer sites. Five large hunting clubs (Whorl's Club, East Branch Club, Mikesell Hunt Club, Spile Dam Club and Two Heart Hunt Club) have land along the river. Other hunting-fishing type cabins are scattered along the streams in the study area. Although many of these can be seen from the river, most are generally not obtrusive to the river use. Many are rustic in character and blend with the natural environment.

There are eight cabins in the ten miles of mainstream above High Bridge and eight cabins and two housetrailer in the 25 miles below High Bridge. Seven of the cabins and one trailer are located within a mile of the High Bridge crossing leaving most of the stream frontage downstream in an undeveloped state. The North Branch has four cabins scattered in the headwater area, while the West Branch has one near its confluence with the South Branch. A cluster of three cabins (Whorl's Club) is located near the extreme headwaters of the South Branch and another four are scattered along the seven miles of stream. Except for a cluster of 3 cabins of the East Branch Club, only four others are scattered along the East Branch's 20-mile length. Dawson Creek, including Little Dawson Creek and Whiskey Creek, has nine cabins upstream from Pine Stump Junction.

C. Public Recreation Areas

The wilderness character of the vast undeveloped area north of Newberry holds a fascination for many people. The Two Hearted River is part of this isolation and offers the trout fisherman,

outdoorsman, and canoeist an opportunity for quiet, peaceful pursuit of his recreation. Many lakes accessible to the public provide fishing, boating, swimming, and camping enjoyment.

There are 15 developed State Forest Campgrounds in Luce County. Four of these are located on the banks of the Two Hearted and provide 56 campsites. Three of the campgrounds – High Bridge, Reed and Green Bridge, and Mouth of the Two Hearted – are accessible by road. The fourth can be reached only by canoe and is located about six miles downstream from High Bridge. It contains three rustic campsites. Ten other state forest campgrounds in the vicinity provide an additional 102 campsites. Muskallonge State Park is within six miles of High Bridge and offers another 150 campsites with modern facilities.

Other nearby areas of interest include the Blind Sucker Wildlife Flooding in the northwest portion of the county, the 15,000 acre Betsy Lake Natural Area Preserve, and the Tahquamenon River with its spectacular falls. Tahquamenon Falls State Park offers 320 modern campsites. Two privately operated businesses provide excursion trips down the Tahquamenon, to the falls. These trips are by narrow gauge railroad and riverboat.

D. Fishing

The Two Hearted River is one of Michigan's finest trout streams. The upper portion of the mainstream and four of its major tributaries of the South Branch, however, fingerling brook trout have been stocked at "Antlers" and "Hemlock Dam" to supplement the area of heavy fishing pressure. Catchable trout run seven to 12 inches with occasional larger fish in beaver ponds.

The West Branch produces an abundance of small brook trout. Martindary Lake at its headwaters is spring fed and when flooded by beaver has produced some very nice brookies in the 12-16 inch class. The West Branch sustains itself by natural reproduction and has not been stocked with trout in the past 25 years.

Small brook trout are the principal species in Dawson Creek and its tributaries. Fishing pressure is light to moderate and it is felt this watershed has ample reproduction to keep the stream well stocked. Beaver ponds in the smaller portion of the creek also produce nice catches of brook trout.

The best brook trout fishing in the mainstream is now concentrated in the water above High Bridge and for a few miles below. The mainstream was once fine brook trout water right down to its mouth at Lake Superior but brook trout in the lower river have gradually given way to the steelhead trout (rainbow).

The lower river is now famous for its excellent fall and spring steelhead fishing. It also provides probably the best Menominee fishing the state has to offer.

E. Wildlife Observation and Hunting

Deer, bear, coyote, fox, grouse, woodcock, snowshoe hare, porcupine, red squirrel, and many species of smaller birds and mammals are common in the study area. The river and its shoreline or banks are also home to a limited number of waterfowl and shorebirds. Occasionally even moose and signs of moose are reported from the Two Hearted River area.

Of special interest are sandhill cranes which are the largest and most spectacular birds in Michigan. They congregate in early fall in the open fields and plains south of the East Branch. Their spring courting dance is quite unusual.

Whitetailed deer and black bear are the principal big game species hunted in the area. The hunting clubs and camps are evidence of the hunters quest for the big bucks once frequenting the area. Deep snows, severe winter cold and maturing forests have resulted in a lower carrying capacity of the area. The deer herd has decreased in numbers over the years; however, the area still holds some trophy-size bucks. Ruffed grouse, woodcock and snowshoe hare provide sport for the upland game hunter. Grouse and hare populations are cyclic; therefore, hunting for these species is better some years than others.

F. Canoeing and Boating

The hardy brook trout fisherman who is willing to pull his canoe over logs and log jams and make an occasional portage will find the South Branch, East Branch, and the mainstream above Reed and Green Bridge to his liking. These streams are not recommended to the casual canoeist who wants to avoid getting wet. There is a fine canoeing campground between High Bridge and Reed and Green Bridge.

For pleasant canoeing, the river below Reed and Green Bridge is hard to beat. Between Reed and Green Bridge and the mouth, there are approximately 17 minor rapids which are safe but interesting and offer excellent fishing.

G. Historical Areas

The Hinsdale Archaeological Map of Michigan shows that there is a Woodlands Indian village site and a campsite located on the west bank of the Two Hearted River near the mouth. Further research must be conducted to confirm that these Indians actually camped along the river. However, there is sufficient evidence to indicate that an archaeological survey of the Two Hearted River would reveal numerous prehistoric Indian archaeological sites. Dr. Charles Cleland, Curator of Anthropology, Michigan State University, hopes that such a survey can be made in the not too distant future.

Evidence of the logging era from the late 1800's to early 1900's still exists in the Two Hearted River system. Remains of the loggers' water control dams can be found at Hunter Dam on the upper mainstream, Old Dam and Spile Dam on the West Branch, and Hemlock Dam on the South Branch. Remains of a logging road bridge, Shamrock Bridge, can be seen on the East Branch. The river still contains hundreds of logs lost during the log drives. Many logs still retain the original registered log marks stamped by the early loggers.

Remains of an old U.S. Coast Guard Life Boat Station dating back to the late 1800's are still evidenced by log cribs, cement sidewalks and a few wind beaten Lombardy poplars near the mouth of the mainstream between the north bank and Lake Superior.

